

NEWSLETTER

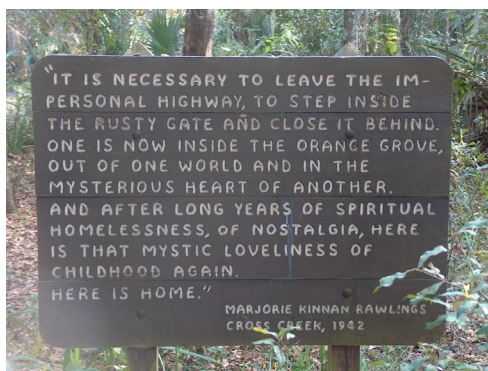
President's Letter

Dear MKR Society Friends –

I think back to my first visit to the farm at Cross Creek. I had visited writers' homes before, and maybe I was expecting a similar experience as I checked out of my hotel in Gainesville and headed south along 441. I slowed as I passed the house and turned into the parking lot. I was a little surprised, but pleased, to find the parking lot unpaved. I stepped out of my car and slid a few dollar bills in the brown envelope, then walked toward the house.

As I neared the fence, I stopped and read the brown, wooden sign with a quotation from *Cross Creek*. "It is necessary to leave the impersonal highway, to step inside the rusty gate and close it behind. One is now inside the orange grove, out of one world and in the mysterious heart of another. And after long years of spiritual homelessness, of nostalgia, here is that mystic loveliness of childhood again. Here is home." That sent me floating back to my childhood—adventures with my cousins on the farm my grandparents ran, playing in a feral field, in the middle of the woods, that held the remains of a former homestead, sliding on the ice from muskrat lodge to muskrat lodge in the middle of a Michigan winter.

I had not read Rawlings's biography yet, and I didn't consciously know that we shared many childhood experiences, even though I was unconsciously drawn into her life through my first reading of *Cross Creek*. I felt comfortable and at peace as I followed the dirt path between the citrus trees toward the barn and the house. No souvenir shop, no finely dressed tour guides; in fact, it looked like a normal house from 1940s Florida—not the home of a woman who shared an editor with the likes of Hemingway and Fitzgerald. There were a few people wandering around, some taking pictures, some just enjoying the view, along with a man in overalls and woman in a cotton dress and apron working in the garden. I didn't realize, until I toured the house, that they were park employees, maintaining the farm.



Announcements

- **March 21-22, 2014:** 27th Annual MKR Conference, Gainesville Hilton.
- **March 22, 2014, 12:00 p.m.** Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, program on "The Baxters' Rations"

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"THE YEARLING RUN & SCAMPER"
BLENDS LITERACY AND ATHLETICS



On Saturday, November 16, 2013, the students of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Elementary School in Gainesville participated in "*The Yearling Run & Scamper*," a one-mile event that was part of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the publication of the literary classic, *The Yearling*.

Approximately 40 students from kindergarten through the fifth grade ran and scampered to honor the school's namesake, famous author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. This event was part of the many planned activities presented to the public during the yearlong celebration of "The Year of *The Yearling*," sponsored by Friends of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Farm, Inc., the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society, the Matheson Museum, Ward's Supermarket, Subway, and Planet Fitness.

"*The Yearling Run & Scamper*" began with children registering based on their grade. Each child participant received "*The Yearling Run & Scamper*" T-shirt, along with food and drinks. School Coach Deborah Jones directed the various heats, and a boy and girl winner of each heat received a copy of Rawlings's book, *The Secret River*. Also included were relay races for the students who were waiting to run or who had finished running.

Jason Hill, Vice-Principal of Rawlings Elementary School, had encouraged each student to participate in the run and in the literacy activities, which included a coloring corner and reading circle featuring the works of Mrs. Rawlings. The elementary school, which is located at 3500 NE 15th Street in Gainesville, opened 43 years ago, in January 1970, and is proud of its link to one of Florida's most beloved authors.

—Elaine Spencer

*XXVII Annual
Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Conference
Gainesville, Florida
March 21-22, 2014*

Thursday, March 20

- 5 pm Reception, Roy Hunt's House
7 pm Annual Trustees Dinner, Matheson Museum

Friday, March 21 — Hilton Hotel (Century B) Gainesville

- 8—9 am Registration and welcome
9:00—9:30 Keith Huneycutt (Florida Southern College), "The Brown Family of Alachua County"
9:30—10 Anne Pierce (Hawthorne), "Real-Life Baxters: The Reuben Long Family in the Big Scrub"
10:30—11 Dan Cantliffe (UF/IFAS County Extension Director St. Johns County), "Marjorie's Citrus Grove: What She Grew and How She Grew It"
11—11:30 Jim Stephens (Cross Creek), with Kevin McCarthy (Gainesville), "Hamaca Happenings at Cross Creek"
11:30—Noon Mimi Carr (Gainesville), Telling Rawlings's Stories—"Benny and the Bird Dogs" and "The Shell"
2:30 pm Tour of Haile Plantation
6:30 Cocktail hour and banquet, Hilton Hotel (Century B/C)
Guest Speaker: Bill Belleville. Introduction: Leslie Poole

Saturday, April 27—Florida House Inn

- 8:30—9 am MKR Society Business Meeting
9—9:30 MKR Gainesville Writing Contest Winners (Ellen Giallonardo)
MKR College Writing Contest Winners: Sara Green (Western Carolina University) (Kevin McCarthy and Ashley Lear)
9:30-10 Jan Goodwin Annino, "Marjorie's Younger Years, for Young Readers"
10:30—11 Flo Turcotte (University of Florida) and Sandra Parks (St. Augustine), "Florida Icons—Zora Neale Hurston, Stetson Kennedy, and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings"
11—11:30 Heather McPherson (*The Orlando Sentinel*), "The Foods of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings"
11:30—12:15 J. T. Glisson (Evinston), with Kevin McCarthy (Gainesville)
12:30 Luncheon, Hilton Hotel, Century A. Guest Speaker: Shelley Fraser Mickle (Gainesville), "Finding Marjorie"



President's Letter (*Continued from Page 1*)

As I walked the paths around the property, the March sun warmed the air that had been kissed by citrus blossoms, a mockingbird called to its mate. I looked down and on the path saw the tiny impression of a fawn, which reminded me of Jody's yearling Flag. I strolled across the road and along another path, noticing the unique green of the citrus leaves and came upon another sign, "The hammocks were the same then as now, and will be the same forever if men can be induced to leave them alone." That led me to the first hike I took



along the Kissimmee River, a stretch of the Florida Trail that wandered through scrub and prairie and finally ended up under an oak hammock. It was my first experience with a hammock, the arching limbs reminded me of the arches in a cathedral, and that moment was just as cathartic. The cool, fertile earth beneath my feet and the sheltering leaves about my head held me transfixed between two worlds, not just above and below, but past and present. Rawlings was right. We need to "induce" men to "leave [the hammocks] alone." It is our past, Florida's past and our children's future.

—*Steve Brahlek*

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society *Newsletter*

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IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

Please check your address label. The date that you see on the label is the date your dues are due. If your membership is current, we thank you!

